

Testimony on HB 4003 / SB4

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Eileen McNeil, President

Citizens for Traditional Values

Good morning, Madame Chair and members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 4003 and Senate Bill 4. My name is Eileen McNeil, and I am the President of Citizens for Traditional Values and come before you to express our opposition to this bill as it currently stands.

This is an important discussion to have as it would enact a broad social policy that could impact the lives and the livelihoods of many around the state.

Hate and discrimination of any kind is unacceptable. I heartily believe as would most Christians, Jews, Buddhists and other communities of faith. As Christians, as well as those of other faiths, we believe that God created ALL human life in His image and that every person has positive value and deserves respect. WE would agree wholeheartedly with Sen. Chang's comments that is unethical to deny someone a job because of who they are – of course. And that is already fixed in our laws... I heard anecdotal stories that spoke of "feelings" and assumptions in the Senate Testimony... I did NOT hear about any lawsuit being brought against any transgender individuals. However, that is not the case in the reverse, where there is a constant barrage of lawsuits being brought against Christian businesses and services. **The change proposed to Elliot-Larsen goes too far** because it seeks to protect one group of people at the expense of others,

That is why I am here today before you to oppose the current version of this bill to amend the Elliot Larsen Civil Rights Act of 1976.

I am deeply concerned that House Bill 4003 and Senate Bill 4 do not provide any protections for those who identify with deeply held religious convictions and for the expression of those convictions. Instead this creates a “super-right” for just one community at the expense of another.

I urge you to consider and PASS the FIVE amendments before you that WILL provide common sense protections and do NOT diminish your efforts to include sexual orientation and gender identity in the House and Senate bills.

22 states across the nation that have adopted new protected classes of people in its state civil rights law ALSO have included religious liberty protections. Why would MI not do the same?

WITHOUT these amendments the creation of new protected classes of individuals, **gives new legal causes of action** on the basis of “sexual orientation and gender identity and expression,” THIS will weaponize activists who want to sue and increase regulation on religious organizations and in particular on small business people exercising their sincere religious conscience in running their businesses.

What are the unintended consequences? That is important. These vague and overbroad categories, if enacted into law, could enable arbitrary discrimination to occur against people of faith in a manner that policymakers may not have previously considered.

In essence it authorizes government action forcing businesses and citizens of faith of all backgrounds (e.g., Muslim, Jewish, Christian, etc.), to make a terrible choice: act against their Constitutionally protected consciences and their sincerely held religious identity or face the full force of the state’s governmental and regulatory power in protracted legal battles, both administratively and in the courts.

Representatives - you are here to serve ALL of your constituents and surely as members of this Judiciary committee you are committed to ensure every Michigander has equal protection under the law. I hope that ALSO includes businesses, religious institutions and citizens who believe in traditional ideas of

family and human sexuality and their rights to have a deeply held religious identity and expression—

WITHOUT fear of retribution from an activist who disagrees with that identity and expression

It is important for the Legislature and policy makers to take a serious look at the interests of all the citizens of this state before making such sweeping changes to Michigan law.

I ask you, on behalf of thousands across the state, to include these amendments that would accommodate the fundamental constitutional rights of your citizens.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Eileen McNeil
President
Citizens for Traditional Values